

July

Free

Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

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Plastic Free July

by Dawn Lotty

Plastic Free July is a global yearly challenge where millions of people give up single use plastic during the month of July. It aims to raise awareness of the amount of single-use disposable plastic items in our lives and challenges people to do something about it.

It is estimated that 6 out of 10 of us are already aware of the problems associated with single use plastic shopping bags, take away coffee cups, plastic water bottles, straws and utensils and recycle what cannot be avoided.

With China no longer buying Australia's recycling – and new legislation currently reducing plastic use in all Australian states except Victoria and NSW – we have the chance to move towards zero single use plastic waste.

To understand the extent of the problem the next time you bring home your grocery shopping place it on the kitchen bench and sererate every item that comes in a plastic container.

If you are of a certain age like me you will remember when milk came in glass bottles, butter was wrapped in grease proof paper, sliced bread came in wax paper and your meat was wrapped in butcher's paper.

Items like sugar, salt, rice and dried pasta came in a paper bag or box, condiments came in glass bottles and no one wrapped fruit and vegetables in plastic.

While it is highly unlikely that we will ever return to those times a scan along the supermarket shelves will reveal manufacturers who still sell the products you need in plastic free packaging. There is even a sliced bread company that uses brown paper bags.

A Plastic free July won't be easy. Once you start you will see plastic everywhere and wonder what's the point. Just remember birds eat the stuff and die, marine creatures get entangled in it and die and the plastic you buy today will outlive your great, great, grandchildren.



While we are still doing this.....supermarkets in Amsterdam have moved to plastic free packaging

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Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.



10,000 year old Larsen Ice shelf is predicted to break off in 2020

Antarctica has Lost 3 trillion tonnes of Ice in 25 years.

The annual rate of ice loss has tripled during that period, reaching 159 billion tonnes a year. Overall, enough ice has been lost from Antarctica over the past quarter-century to raise global seas by 8 millimetres.

Despite being the most remote region on Earth, changes in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean will have global consequences for the planet and humanity.

For example, the rate of sea-level rise depends on the response of the Antarctic ice sheet to warming of the atmosphere and ocean, while the speed of climate change depends on how much heat and carbon dioxide is taken up by

the Southern Ocean. What's more, marine ecosystems all over the world are sustained by the nutrients exported from the Southern Ocean to lower latitudes.

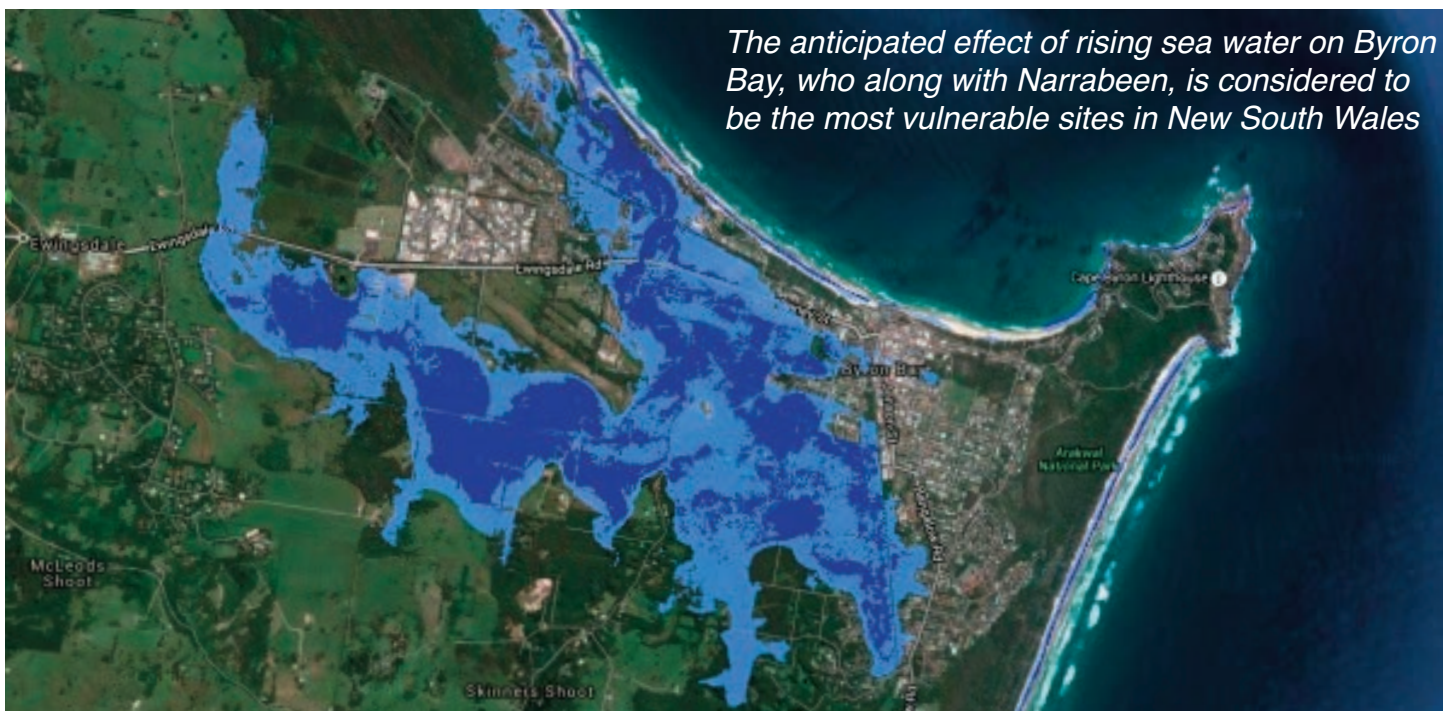
From a political perspective, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean are among the largest shared spaces on Earth, regulated by a unique governance regime known as the Antarctic Treaty System. So far this regime has been successful at managing the environment and avoiding discord.

However, just as the physical and biological systems of Antarctica face challenges from rapid environmental change driven by human activities, so too does the management of the continent.

If global greenhouse gas emissions remain unchecked, the climate continues to warm and little policy action is taken to respond to environmental factors, the Antarctic sea levels will continue to rise. Alternatively if ambitious action can be taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to establish policies that reduce human pressure on Antarctica's environment we may prevent a looming disaster.

If our more ambitious scenario for Antarctica plays out, there is a good chance that the continent's buttressing ice shelves will survive and that Antarctica's contribution to sea-level rise will remain below 1 metre. A rise of 1m or more would displace millions of people and cause substantial economic hardship.

Source, NASA, CSIRO, Monash University



The anticipated effect of rising sea water on Byron Bay, who along with Narrabeen, is considered to be the most vulnerable sites in New South Wales



More Yellow Crazy Ants Found

By Enid Meldrum

A second outbreak of yellow crazy ants has been confirmed at Terania Creek, 30kms north of the original infestation in the Lismore CBD.

The yellow crazy ant is a highly destructive species which is said to be in the top 100 invasive species in the world. They move very quickly, build super colonies and are thought to be highly dangerous not only to crops and local ecosystems but also to humans and pets. There is a risk of blindness to humans or animals who get close to the ants, which can spray formic acid.

Yellow crazy ants have reportedly decimated native wildlife such as ground-dwelling birds and smaller insects in Queensland and in the 1990s were thought to have killed tens of millions of red land crabs on Christmas Island.

NSW had been yellow crazy ant free for more than a decade until an outbreak early last month at Lismore.

Key points:

- Yellow crazy ants are recognised by their pale yellow colour, unusually long legs and antennae.
- Their name is derived from their frantic movements and frequent changes in direction, particularly when disturbed.
- The ants use a formic acid to overpower and destroy prey very quickly.
- They're known to build super colonies with several queens which can expand rapidly and in some cases double in size in just 12 months.

Movement restriction strategy

Following the latest outbreak at Terania Creek, Mr Scot Charlton from the NSW DPI will continue to investigate and monitor for further

presence of the ants and is now reviewing the movement restrictions put in force on June 1, following the Lismore yellow crazy ant outbreak in early May. The restrictions prevent the movement of plant matter and soil within, into or from the restricted zone, for a five kilometre radius of the CBD without a permit unless taken to the Lismore Recycling and Recovery Centre.

Baiting for eradication

The NSW DPI has taken steps to eradicate the yellow crazy ants at the Terania Creek site and are also treating another site at Goonellabah as a "property of interest" following a report of possible yellow crazy ants.

IMPORTANT: immediately report any possible sightings to the NSW Department of Primary Industry on (02) 9338 6600

Source: various news reports



Slaughter of Wedge Tail Eagles

At least 136 Wedge Tail eagles were intentionally poisoned last week in East Gippsland, Victoria with concerns that more are yet to be found. It's been suggested by farmers that the birds were killed to protect lambs.

However, evidence gathered during extensive research in Australia has shown that in most cases, eagles seen feeding on lamb or sheep carcasses are "cleaning up" after other predators like foxes and crows, which were actually the direct cause of death.

Tragically, not only was this illegal cull unnecessary, but it could also have ecological consequences right across Australia as a very high number of birds affected make it likely that they were largely juveniles.

Authorities are confident those responsible will soon be prosecuted and could serve a jail sentence.

Source: Simon Cherriman, Murdoch University



Five Minute Furniture

by Liz Gander

On a recent sojourn south to a land where hard rubbish collection still occurs I noticed the frequency of armchairs and couches. High in the count were fold out sofas, many while still in tact and not looking very old indeed had been expelled to landfill.

The other very common item was lounge suites condemned early in life due to peeling upholstery. When it comes to reducing our waste it would be good to shift the focus to the manufacturers of these cheap throw away items.

I've always been of the mind that if you buy quality you buy it once, sure the cost is more to start but the cost in the long run is more to your pocket and more to the environment.

Some houses had so much rubbish out the front that I wondered if they had anything left inside at all! Is it the new norm to replace your furniture every few years or is it just that the built in redundancy of products these days make this a certainty for manufacturing?

So much furniture these days is made from engineered wood that it can't be repaired, veneers that can't be sanded back and repainted and knobs and brackets that may be hard to find. People are also too time poor to bother trying to repair anything so out it goes. Next time you need to buy furniture consider the longevity of the item, look for quality and pay a little more so it will last.

Conscious consumption is the only answer here, bespoke furniture not only lasts a lifetime but also says more about you especially if you have had input in the design. If that is out of your price range then consider buying second-hand, a quick Gumtree search turns up a huge amount of quality furniture so you can still afford to change your decor without filling the tip. Let's make a start on reversing the trend, give those big chain stores a miss and buy quality.



State Budget - Climate Change Barely Mentioned

Environmental issues including climate change were given a low priority in the NSW State Budget for 2018/19. Of even more concern is that \$143 million out of \$208 million allocated in the 2017/18 budget from *The Climate Change Fund* remains unspent. There is no indication how much will be spent in the coming year even though the latest annual survey from *The Lowy Institute* shows that 59% of Australians support strong climate action, and 84% want the government to embrace renewable energy even if it's more expensive.

Village Eco News

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

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Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

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